Sociolinguistic Variation in Urban Linguistic Landscapes

Edited by
Sofie Henricson, Väinö Syrjälä, Carla Bagna and Martina Bellinzona

Studia Fennica
Linguistica

Studia Fennica
Linguistica 24

The Finnish Literature Society (SKS) was founded in 1831 and began publishing books in 1834. Now, the society publishes scholarly literature on ethnology and folkloristics, linguistics, literary studies, and history.

The first volume in the Studia Fennica series was published in 1933.

Studia Fennica consists of six subseries: (since 1992) Ethnologica, Folkloristica, Linguistica, (since 2002) Historica, Litteraria, and (since 2007) Anthropologica.

In addition to publishing, the Finnish Literature Society conducts research, maintains a research library and an archive containing folklore and literary collections, and promotes Finnish literature abroad.

Series Editor For This Volume
Salla Kurhila

Studia Fennica Editorial Board

SF Anthropologica
Timo Kallinen, Professor, University of Eastern Finland, Finland
Kenneth Sillander, Title of Docent, University of Helsinki, Finland

SF Ethnologica
Arja Turunen, Title of Docent, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, Title of Docent, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

SF Folkoristica
Karina Lukin, Title of Docent, University of Helsinki, Finland
Anne Heimo, Professor, University of Turku, Finland

SF Historica
Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Professor, University of Turku, Finland
Heini Hakosalo, Title of Docent, University of Oulu, Finland

SF Linguistica
Salla Kurhila, Professor, University of Helsinki, Finland
Suvi Honkanen, PhD, University Lecturer, University of Helsinki, Finland

SF Litteraria
Viola Parente-Čapková, Professor, University of Turku, Finland
Saija Isomaa, Title of Docent, University of Tampere, Finland

Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen, Secretary General, Title of Docent, Finnish Literature Society, Finland
Kirsi Keravuori, Director of Scholarly Publishing, PhD, Finnish Literature Society, Finland
Maija Yli-Kätkä, Secretary of the Board, Finnish Literature Society, Finland

oa.finlit.fi

Editorial Office
SKS
P.O. Box 259
FI-00171 Helsinki
www.finlit.fi

Sociolinguistic Variation in Urban Linguistic Landscapes

Edited by
Sofie Henricson, Väinö Syrjälä,
Carla Bagna and Martina Bellinzona

Finnish Literature Society • SKS • Helsinki • 2024

STUDIA FENNICA LINGUISTICA 24

The publication has undergone a peer review.

The collection of archived publications of the Finnish Literature Society is included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

© 2024 Sofie Henricson, Väinö Syrjälä, Carla Bagna, Martina Bellinzona and SKS

Cover Design: Timo Numminen
Design: Markus Itkonen
Layout: Keski-Suomen Sivu Oy
EPUB: Keski-Suomen Sivu Oy
ISBN 978-951-858-870-5 (Print)
ISBN 978-951-858-871-2 (EPUB)
ISBN 978-951-858-872-9 (PDF)

ISSN 0085-6835 (Studia Fennica. Print)
ISSN 2669-9605 (Studia Fennica. Online)
ISSN 1235-1938 (Studia Fennica Linguistica. Print)
ISSN 2669-9559 (Studia Fennica Linguistica. Online)

DOI https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 International License, unless otherwise specified. (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

A free open access version of the book is available at https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24 or by scanning this QR code with your mobile device.

BoD – Books on Demand, Norderstedt, Germany 2024

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments 7

Sofie Henricson, Väinö Syrjälä,
Carla Bagna & Martina Bellinzona
1. Introduction 8

Väinö Syrjälä
2. Unofficial Signs and their Model Readers on the Fringes of the City 20
The Linguistic Landscapes of Stockholm's Nature Reserves

Lena Granstedt, Coppélie Cocq, Eva Lindgren & Urban Lindgren
3. Hybrid Language Use in Urban Landscapes of Northern Sweden 37

Line Sandst
4. Power, Language and Visibility Defining the Linguistic Landscape 51

Sofie Henricson
5. Activist Linguistic Landscapes in Urban Districts of Helsinki 69

Carla Bagna, Martina Bellinzona & Viola Monaci
6. Linguistic Landscape between Concrete Signs and Citizens' Perceptions 92
Exploring Sociolinguistic and Semiotic Differences in Neighbourhoods of Florence

Maria Vittoria Calvi & Marcella Uberti-Bona
7. Affect and Responsibility in the Pandemic 115
New Attitudes in the Linguistic Landscape of Milan

Lieselott Nordman & Väinö Syrjälä
8. Rules and Recommendations on Unofficial Signs 137
COVID-19 Signscapes in Helsinki and Stockholm

Tuomo Hiippala, Tuomas Väisänen & Hanna-Mari Pienimäki
9. A Multimodal Approach to Physical and Virtual Linguistic Landscapes across Different Spatial Scales 158

List of Authors 179
Abstract 182
Index 183

Acknowledgments

The idea of writing this book dates back several years and arose from informal collaboration among the editors, who shared an interest in the exploration of variation in urban linguistic landscapes. The editorial work was carried out in connection with our employment at the University for Foreigners of Siena (Bagna and Bellinzona), the University of Helsinki (Henricson) and Södertörn University (Syrjälä), without external funding and mostly via online meetings. We express our sincerest gratitude to all the authors for their inspiring and enlightening contributions as well as their cooperation and patience. We are grateful for the opportunity to disseminate the results of our joint research efforts through the Finnish Literature Society (SKS). For guidance during the publication process we wish to thank the series editors Salla Kurhila and Laura Visapää, as well as our technical editor Eija Hukka. The anonymous reviewers helped us to sharpen the argumentation and to improve the coherence of the volume in many ways, while the language has been refined with the insightful help of Joan Nordlund from University of Helsinki's Language Revision Service. Finally, we wish to thank participants at the 13th Linguistic Landscape Workshop in Hamburg in September 2022 for inspiring discussions on the topic addressed in the volume.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

1. Introduction

SOFIE HENRICSON
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6672-8078

VÄINÖ SYRJÄLÄ
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5303-8112

CARLA BAGNA
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3044-4601

MARTINA BELLINZONA
https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9049-1360

This book contributes to the multidisciplinary research field of linguistic landscape, henceforth LL, a field attracting increasing interest across countries as well as in various scientific disciplines such as linguistics, human geography and semiotics. It is a vibrant and steadily expanding research field, which is reflected in the many anthologies covering different topics and methodological approaches (e.g. Shohamy & Gorter 2009; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael & Barni 2010; Rubdy & Ben Said 2015; Blackwood, Lanza & Woldemariam 2016; Shohamy, Pütz & Mundt 2018). Previous LL research of special interest in this book includes but is not limited to the study of multilingualism and minority languages (e.g. Cenoz & Gorter 2006; Gorter 2006; Gorter, Marten & Mensel 2012; Hélot, Barni, Janssen & Bagna 2012), the omnipresence of English (e.g. Laitinen 2014; Lanza & Woldemariam 2014), and visibility of languages and ethnolinguistic vitality (e.g. Landry & Bourhis 1997; Barni & Bagna 2010; Vandenbroucke 2015), as well as papers offering theoretical and methodological reflections on LL research (e.g. Scollon & Scollon 2003; Spolsky 2009; Jaworski & Thurlow 2010; Barni & Bagna 2015; Blackwood 2015; Cresswell 2015; Gorter & Cenoz 2020).

LL is a relatively young research field that during the last decades has developed into an established field known by most linguists in the 2020s. Some studies in the 1970s and 1980s are often mentioned as early contributions to the field of linguistic landscape studies, but Landry & Bourhi's study from 1997 has however often been noted as a turning point, where after the field started growing exponentially. Today, in the early 2020s, LL is an established field that since 2015 has its own leading journal, *Linguistic Landscape: An international journal*, many sources describing its evolution and topical focal points (most recently Gorter & Cenoz 2023) and an extensive online bibliography (Troyer 2023) documenting its continuous expansion and growth. LL is a multidisciplinary field attracting not only linguists but also researchers in geography, sociology, economics and urban research, for example. Also within linguistics, which is the scope of the current volume, it informs research on a broad spectrum including sociolinguistics, language policy, multilingualism, contact linguistics, onomastics, language and gender studies, educational linguistics, and many other kinds of applied linguistics.

LL research nowadays incorporates a broad range of semiotic spaces, including but not restricted to buildings, tattoos, sounds and virtual spaces. Our prime focus

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

in this book is on physical urban spaces and their LLs but we approach these urban spaces through both physical and virtual data. Urban LLs include various publicly displayed signs ranging from official road signs, for example, to unofficial signs such as those authored by businesses or private individuals (e.g. Landry & Bourhis 1997; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006). Further, urban LLs also include unauthorised signs, such as graffiti on a park bench, placed in the public sphere without permission, or so-called transgressive signs (Scollon & Scollon 2003; Pennycook 2009). Unlike official signs authored by national or local authorities, LLs created by citizens are not as constricted by legislation and other regulations, nor do they necessarily adhere to linguistic policies or politically correct discourses.

More specifically, this book concerns urban LLs in different cities in northern and southern Europe (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Italy), and how they differ among urban areas with diverse profiles of linguistic and socioeconomic demographics, for example, or how they evolve as the city develops or in times of crisis. The common thread linking the chapters in this book is a mutual interest in sociolinguistic variation in the LLs of urban spaces. The authors approach this shared overarching interest by addressing a variety of questions, of which the following are central in all chapters:

- *How do different processes of the LLs create and reflect specific profiles and identities of urban districts?* This question is addressed by the chapters in this volume from different perspectives: in Chapter 2 from the point of view of the model reader, in Chapter 3 studying five urban centres in a multilingual Nordic region, in Chapter 4 with focus on names and place branding, in Chapter 5 through an analysis of activist discourses, in Chapter 6 from both a citizen and a researcher perspective, in Chapter 7 departing from commercial LLs of migration, in Chapter 8 exploring COVID-19 signscapes in two capital regions of the Nordic countries and in Chapter 9 by proposing a multifaceted methodological combination for the exploration of sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs.
- *What roles do different languages and discourses play in urban LLs?* The chapters discuss both highly monolingual (e.g. Chapter 2) and highly multilingual (e.g. Chapter 7) urban areas and touch upon a variety of central discourses highlighted in the urban districts in focus, such as commerciality (Chapter 3, Chapter 4, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8), societal activism (Chapter 5), responsibility and solidarity (Chapter 7, Chapter 8). The universally present English language is included in the LLs of all the studied research sites but besides this common trait, the chapters discuss urban LLs with a diversity of languages and (im)balances between them. Chapter 3 further discusses the challenges of labelling signs of the urban LLs according to clearly demarcated categories of named languages.
- *How do urban LLs evolve in relation to the global and local society in which they are emplaced?* Both locally anchored and global societal changes in the LLs are explored in the chapters, including those related to urban planning and development processes (Chapter 2, Chapter 4), societal discourses (Chapter 5), tourism and migration (Chapter 6, Chapter 7), language contact (Chapter 3, Chapter 6) and the recent global COVID-19 pandemic (Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8).
- *Which theoretical concepts and methodological procedures have the potential to deepen understanding of sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs?* The chapters

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

included in this volume offer sophisticated and novel ways of approaching urban LLs from different perspectives that are adapted to the specific aims and contexts of each study. This includes both different ways of doing survey area selection and defining the unit of analysis as well as a variety of conceptual frameworks and methodological tools. Further, the studies presented in this volume give concrete examples on how research adapts to societal changes by developing new methods for survey area selection or data collection during the pandemic, for example (see Chapter 2, Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8).

A shared point of departure for all chapters is the sociolinguistic premise that variation in language use is not random. On the contrary, linguistic variation has both linguistic and social connotations. How LLs reflect and create sociolinguistic, societal and urban dynamics and how these relations can be scientifically explored is thus the main concern throughout the book.

1.1 Sociolinguistic Variation in Complex and Changing Urban Contexts

The departure point of this book is an interest in language in society and how language and discourse vary in relation to factors such as the geographical and temporal emplacement of signs in physical urban spaces. This approach links the study of urban LLs to a sociolinguistic interest in language variation related to regional or social indexes (i.e. dialects and sociolects). The main conceptual framework on which this study of variation in urban LLs is based is thus the societal rather than the individual level. We focus on LLs in specific European cities and investigate questions such as the profiles of different urban districts in terms of linguistic diversity, societal discourses or urban identity, for example. An interest in urban variation does not necessarily exclude sensitivity to individual and situational variation, however, which is highlighted in studies focusing on readers of signs in specific areas, or departing from citizen perspectives on urban mapping, or including analyses of language use both on social media platforms and on physical signs in urban LLs.

LL studies have been criticised at times for the haphazard selection of survey areas (see e.g. Blackwood 2015). Nowadays, therefore, there is increasing awareness of the need for the deliberate selection of a survey area as well as for inspiring examples of how this is done in practice (see e.g. Soukup 2020). As the chapters in this book illustrate, it can be done in a multitude of carefully considered ways, from handpicking urban areas of specific interest to allowing tools from human geography to guide the selection, dictated by the specific research questions posed at the LL. In terms of concrete possibilities, however, survey areas vary considerably from one study to another. For example, different countries and municipalities have different ways of categorising and registering their populations according to basic sociolinguistic parameters such as first language or ethnolinguistic origin. This complexity underpins most LL studies and gives the study of each local context its specific set of given background data, although there is seldom time or space to reflect in detail on the biases this is bound to create.

The need for and the relevance of measurable and exact parameters when choosing specific survey areas further varies depending on the focus and methodological basis

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

of the study, and in this respect the chapters of this book offer a range of equally valid but inherently different approaches. Comparative mappings of different urban profiles need a solid base on which to quantify language use and multilingualism, whereas ongoing processes and the constantly evolving shapes of urbanity might be better grasped through ethnographic approaches (as Blommaert & Maly 2016 argue, for example) and an emphasis on qualitative rather than quantitative analysis. As shown by many studies in this volume, mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches can offer further nuances to these analyses.

1.2 Global Processes in Situated Localities

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness and synchronisation in different parts of the world and among the people in it in fields such as culture, economics and politics (see e.g. Coupland 2013). It is a seemingly ever-accelerating process with a global reach to which only the most privileged societies and individuals have primary access, and the means to exploit it (e.g. Blommaert 2010; Mufwene 2013). In linguistics contexts, in turn, globalisation is often discussed in terms of how a dominant culture or language spreads globally and hence intrudes on other more locally restricted cultures and languages, the main focus naturally being on the spread of English (for critical perspectives and overviews, see e.g. Pennycook 1994; Mufwene 2013; Sharifian 2016). The scientific discussion on globalisation and language nevertheless developed from an initial perspective on the global spread of English as a strictly homogenising and subduing process to a closer examination of the heterogeneous ways in which local communities adapt to global processes and forces and make them their own (see e.g. Robertson 2012; Mufwene 2013).

Examples of current global processes affecting and evolving in dialogue with local urban LLs around the world include migration, gentrification and segregation. Another recent case in point that arose suddenly is the COVID-19 pandemic, which illustrates the rapidity of global spread due to high-speed transport systems, as well as how local societies adapt to and address this joint threat within their specific cultural, economic and political frameworks (for topical papers, see Lou, Malinowski & Peck 2022). Indeed, the course of the pandemic and different responses to it, from lockdowns in Italy to a more recommendations based strategy in Sweden left different kinds of marks on LLs and highlighted how public signs can reflect and be used in order to influence societal phenomena. This impact the pandemic has had on LL research as well as societies in large is visible in several of the chapters in this book. Overall, the current book thus offers insights into how different kinds of global processes are reflected in and adapt to the local LLs of northern and southern Europe, and hence into how the glocalisation of globalisation is transmitted in a selection of urban LLs.

The analyses of global processes in local urban LLs presented in the chapters of this book depart from the significance of emplacement (Scollon & Scollon 2003), meaning where the LLs and their individual signs are situated. In this sense, one should consider both temporal emplacement, such as during the different phases of the pandemic, as well as emplacement in a certain part of the world (e.g. Europe, Scandinavia, or Stockholm) or specific localities within larger urban contexts, such as different city districts. The point is not to establish a clear dichotomy between global

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

processes and their local implications, or between patterns in the LLs of southern and northern Europe, or even between Finland and Sweden. The overarching aim is rather to enhance understanding of the intertwined and multifaceted connections between globality and locality by zooming in and out on the different levels of globalisation and glocalisation.

1.3 Inclusion and Exclusion

Although the signs of urban LLs are publicly displayed, not everyone has a voice in this public discursive arena, hence access as an author tends to be restricted to specific official and private actors. LLs frequently split into two main strata based on the authors: a formal level including so-called *top-down signs* authored by authorities, and an informal level including so-called *bottom-up signs* authored by private actors (see e.g. Ben-Rafael et al. 2006). However, this is not a simple official-private dichotomy: the signs rather reflect a complex network of semiotic spaces (public and private) and discourses (e.g. regulatory, infrastructural, commercial and transgressive) on which the urban LL is built (see Scollon & Scollon 2003; Kallen 2010). Let us briefly summarise some broad categories of signs within the LL to shed light on how this is expressed as sociolinguistic variation.

Top-down signs adhere to official rules and recommendations concerning choice of language, for example, and hence usually reflect official language and other policies of the state, the municipality or some other authority. The authors of bottom-up signs, in turn, obviously have to adhere to certain regulations concerning where a sign can be displayed, and so on, but in many cases they have more freedom in matters such as language choice. They thus have more options in terms of reflecting their own perspectives on the signs, of which many are commercial, adjusting the messages to the surrounding society and locally important minority groups, or specifically targeting customers and thereby fulfilling their intended (commercial) functions. Urban LLs also contain signs that in their very existence protest against regulations covering publicly displayed signage. In that they are displayed in a public urban space without permission, these transgressive signs break the rules of the urban LL.

All these different signs in combination contribute to how the 'sense of a place' (see Cresswell 2015) is created and experienced. The LL of a city or an urban district reflects the intended occupants of the public space, as well as the functions and activities that characterise it. Which ingroups and outgroups are created in the LL? Which inhabitants of the city are included in the urban LL by having their languages publicly displayed, for example, and on the contrary, which languages are made publicly invisible and hence restricted to private domains (see Löfdahl et al. 2022)? Do the inhabitants of a city centre dominated by hotel, restaurant and other tourist signs in universal English, in which supermarket signs in the local language are sparse, feel as included and welcome as visiting tourists in this public urban space? How does the discursive atmosphere change if the central station abounds with hate-filled messages telling immigrants to go home, or if it is dominated by signs signalling the opposite, explicitly welcoming migrants and their families?

It is not only the LL of a city or district overall, but also single signs that might, in one way or another, include some readers and exclude others. Inclusion or exclusion

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

may be signalled on many levels, such as by addressing specific persons (e.g. *dear customer*) or in the extreme case of hate messages explicitly excluding specific groups from the urban collective. The choice of language is a form of inclusion or exclusion that is integrated into all signs, however, although the language is not always the main channel of communication, or as easily definable as one might think. A monolingual sign includes all readers of the specific language and excludes all others; a non-verbal sign containing only a masked face, on the other hand, potentially addresses readers of any language and in any age group. Multilingual signs might be polyphonic, perhaps including some languages merely as symbolic of identity or internationality, for example, or they might be homophonic, giving all information in parallel in more than one language and thus including readers of all the selected languages (for categories of signs regarding kinds of multilingualism, see e.g. Reh 2004; Backhaus 2007). The choice of language on signs in urban spaces is also a question of accessibility, as shown in studies on how easy it is for someone who does not know the local language(s) or English to become oriented in a city (Hellén 2019).

1.4 Methodological Diversity and the Challenges of Comparison

The field of LL is notoriously multidisciplinary, multi-conceptual and multimethodological. It is a research field that attracts scientists from various fields employing a broad range of data sets, methodological tools and conceptual lenses. This is underscored in the all-embracing presentation in the leading journal in the field, namely *Linguistic Landscape. An international journal* (2022), referring to its interest in 'multiple forms of 'languages" and an openness to 'all research methodologies'. This declared open approach is further illustrated in the multifaceted phenomena covered by the articles published in the journal, including but not limited to different kinds of linguistic signs, tattoos (Peck & Stroud 2015), smells (Pennycook & Otsuji 2015) and monuments (Huebner & Phoocharoensil 2017).

The multifaceted nature of and the open-mindedness in the field of LL studies are also reflected in this book, which comprises linguistic studies that are united by a joint interest in sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs but depart from various conceptual frameworks such as 'the model reader', 'affective regime' and 'legitimation'. Methodological and theoretical reflections are core issues in all chapters. These include measured procedures for survey area selection and data collection as well as defining the unit of analysis and choosing adequate analytical approaches and conceptual tools. The studies use various methodologies, representing quantitative and qualitative as well as inductive and deductive approaches, and various data sets such as the documentation of visual and virtual signs, focus-group discussions, interviews, census data and language use in both physical and virtual surroundings. The variety within the book thus reflects the nature of this particular research field and develops it with novel approaches. Further, the studies presented in this volume highlight and exemplify the importance of designing each study carefully in accordance with its specific goals and research questions.

Each study reported in this book is intended primarily to speak for itself underneath the umbrella of a specific joint research interest, although there are numerous junction points between the chapters. All in all, the studies pave the way for

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

comparative reflection and future comparative projects, but do not per se offer a basis on which to draw direct comparative conclusions. Conducting clear-cut comparative studies of LLs in different urban contexts is a complex and challenging endeavour, not least because different locations are embedded in specific societal settings that vary in aspects such as language policy and regulations covering signs in public places.

1.5 Perspectives on Sociolinguistic Variation in Urban Linguistic Landscapes

The present book consists of this introduction and eight chapters, each of which explores sociolinguistic variation and societal discourses in the LLs of four different countries and a diversity of urban contexts, namely Copenhagen, Florence, Helsinki, Jokkmokk, Kramfors, Milan, Pajala, Sorsele, Stockholm and Umeå. The selection of urban areas offers a geographical range from northern to southern Europe and includes both smaller towns and bigger cities, as well as central and peripheral districts within them. This variety offers a multifaceted empirical basis for the theoretical and methodological reflections on how sociolinguistic variation in different kinds of urban LLs can be explored. Many LL studies focus on high-density districts with a lot of signs and a lot of potential multilingualism, whereas several chapters in this book represent a more holistic view on urban space, including new development areas as well as peripheral and even rural parts of the city. Thereby, they broaden current views of what is normally studied within research on the LL as a collective urban space. The chapters offer new insights into the LLs of the cities in focus, and in combination they create a basis for comparative reflection as well as conceptual development in future studies.

The second chapter starts the journey through the urban LLs of a selection of European cities with an endeavour to apply Umberto Eco's concept of the model reader to LL studies. It explores language use and the intended audience of signs in Stockholm's nature reserves, with a focus on the addressees. Simultaneously, it offers insights into an urban sphere that has not attracted much attention in previous studies of urban LLs. The case study, which is based on data collected from the fringes of Sweden's capital city, opens up stimulating paths for the further study of both the sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs and the (perceived) use of different urban spaces.

The third chapter highlights the linguistic creativity found in the LL of five urban centres in Northern Sweden, with a particular focus on hybrid word forms discussed from the perspective of language contact. These hybrids most commonly appear on commercial signs and draw on both global and local sources, although at times resulting in a mixture that only makes sense to local readers. The chapter illustrates the challenges faced by many field researchers engaged in the detailed linguistic coding of items in urban LLs.

The fourth chapter analyses the LLs of two developing districts of Copenhagen in Denmark. The chapter focuses on the visibility of signs and takes a holistically qualitative approach to how the LL contributes to the identity of a place. It is a question of zooming in on the sense of place and a place's identity as experienced during a stroll around the districts, while also considering urban onomastics. The chapter highlights the changing and evolving urbanity, ending with a discussion about

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

the processes and actors behind the conscious branding and identity construction of new urban areas.

The fifth chapter explores underground activist layers of the LLs in urban districts of the Finnish capital, Helsinki, from a discourse analytic and sociolinguistic perspective. The study combines an interest in the discursive and linguistic properties of societal stance taking in the transgressive layers of urban LLs in an attempt to map the profiles of activist LLs in different urban districts. The results reveal tendencies that hold across different districts, as well as differences related to linguistic and socioeconomic variation in urban space.

The focus in the sixth chapter is on the characteristics and the identity of different districts of Florence and their LLs, with a special interest in multilingualism, the global COVID-19 crisis and the urban process of touristification. The analysis is based on citizens' perceptions of the urban districts and their LLs, as well as on the researchers' documentation of signs in selected districts. The findings reveal how the LL of an urban district reflect its identity, and how global processes materialise in the local urban space.

The seventh chapter explores the constantly evolving LLs of the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the commercial LL of migration in Milan. The analysis is based on multifaceted data including both offline and online signscapes, and the results show how the LL becomes sensitive to the different phases of the pandemic. Through the notion of affective regimes and taking an ethnographic approach focusing on Spanish-speaking communities from Latin American countries, the authors illustrate how the commercial LLs of Milan's migratory communities emphasised responsibility and solidarity during the crisis caused by the pandemic.

How the critical stages of the pandemic were reflected in urban LLs is also in focus in the eighth chapter, which presents a study of crisis communication through unofficial signs in Helsinki and Stockholm. The discussion is about how different rules and recommendations were communicated and legitimised on unofficial signs in the signscapes of both Finland and Sweden. Based on a combination of sociosemiotics, discourse analysis and translation studies, the study gives insights into the role of unofficial signage in the dissemination of crisis communication, and how moral evaluation, rationalisation and authorisation are used as legitimation strategies in transmitting official COVID-19 regulations among the unofficial layers of urban LLs.

The book concludes with a chapter that draws insights from sociolinguistics, digital humanities and human geography in suggesting a multidisciplinary and methodologically sophisticated approach to the linguistic diversity of urban LLs. The methodological mixture the authors propose departs from both virtual and physical LL data as well as census data, and it combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Paying special attention to the level of linguistic diversity and based on a case study from Helsinki, Finland, the authors propose a systematic procedure for the selection of focus areas and of the in-depth study or urban LLs.

The combined picture the chapters in this book present enhances understanding of the challenges and opportunities included in the study of sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs, and hence contribute to the theoretical and methodological development of the field. In that the chapters take different approaches to the study of sociolinguistic variation in LLs, the book is also useful in providing methodological guidance in the field.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

1.6 An Overview for Scholars

The book has the dual objective of addressing scholars and researchers involved in urban sociolinguistics and offering insights to those wishing to approach the subject from an LL perspective. It also offers interesting suggestions to people involved in language planning and policy reflection, as well as for those who intend to engage in urban redevelopment planning. Consequently, the book will be of use to Master's students, scholars and researchers representing different disciplines.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

References

Backhaus, Peter. 2007. *Linguistic Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo*. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853599484

Barni, Monica & Carla Bagna. 2015. The critical turn in LL. New methodologies and new items in LL. *Linguistic Landscape* 1(1/2), 6–18. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.1.1-2.01bar

Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, Elana Shohamy, Amara Muhammad Hasan & Nira Trumper-Necht. 2006. Linguistic landscape as symbolic construction of the public space: The case of Israel. In Durk Gorter (ed.), *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*. 7–30. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853599170-002

Blackwood, Robert. 2015. LL explorations and methodological challenges. Analysing France's regional languages. *Linguistic Landscape* 1(1/2), 38–53. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.1.1-2.03bla

Blackwood, Robert, Elizabeth Lanza & Hirut Woldemariam (eds.). 2016. *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes.* London: Bloomsbury. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474295352

Blommaert, Jan. 2010. *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511845307

Blommaert, Jan & Ico Maly. 2016. Ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis and social change: A case study. In Karel Arnaut, Jan Blommaert, Ben Rampton & Massimiliano Spotti (eds.), *Language and Superdiversity*. 191–211. New York: Routledge.

Coupland, Nikolas. 2013. Introduction. Sociolinguistics in the global era. In Nikolas Coupland (ed.), *The Handbook of Language and Globalization*. Chichester, West Sussex, England: Wiley-Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444324068.ch

Cresswell, Tim. 2015. *Place: An Introduction.* Second edition. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Gorter, Durk. 2006. *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853599170

Gorter, Durk & Jasone Cenoz. 2020. Theoretical development of linguistic landscape studies. *Linguistic Landscape* 6(1), 16–22. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.00020.gor

Gorter, Durk & Jasone Cenoz. 2023. *A Panorama of Linguistic Landscape Studies*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Gorter, Durk, Heiko F. Marten & Luk Van Mensel (eds.). 2012. *Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230360235

Hellén, Anna Emilia. 2019. Kielimaiseman vaikutus maahanmuuttajien liikkuvuuteen pääkaupunkiseudulla. *Alue ja ympäristö* 48(1), 85–100. https://doi.org/10.30663/ay.71010

Hélot, Christine, Monica Barni, Rudi Janssens & Carla Bagna (eds.). 2012. *Linguistic Landscapes, Multilingualism and Social Change*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-653-02576-7

Huebner, Thom & Supakorn Phoocharoensil. 2017. Monument as semiotic landscape: The contested historiography of a national tragedy. *Linguistic Landscape* 3(2), 101–121. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.3.2.01hue

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Jaworski, Adam & Crispin Thurlow (eds.). 2010. *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*. London: Bloomsbury.

Kallen, Jeffrey L. 2010. Changing landscapes: Language, space and policy in the Dublin linguistic landscape. In Adam Jaworski & Crispin Thurlow (eds.), *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*. 41–58. London, New York: Continuum International Pub. Group.

Laitinen, Mikko. 2014. 630 kilometers by bicycle: observations of English in urban and rural Finland. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 228, 55–77. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2014-0005

Landry, Rodrigue & Richard Y. Bourhis. 1997. Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality. An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16(1), 23–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X970161002

Lanza, Elizabeth & Hirut Woldemariam. 2014. Indexing modernity: English and branding in the linguistic landscape of Addis Ababa. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 18(5), 491–506. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006913484204

Linguistic Landscape. An international journal. 2022. Journal presentation on web page. Accessed 20 October 2022. https://benjamins.com/catalog/ll

Lou, Jackie Jia, David Malinowski & Amiena Peck (eds.). 2022. The linguistic landscape of Covid-19. Special issue of the journal on *Linguistic Landscape* 8(2/3).

Löfdahl, Maria, Johan Järlehed, Tommaso Milani, Helle Lykke Nielsen & Tove Rosendal. 2022. Språkliga hierarkier i Göteborg – en intersektionell och jämförande analys av finskans och somaliskans (o)synlighet och status. In Stina Ericsson, Inga-Lill Grahn & Susanna Karlsson (eds.), *Linguistic Diversity. Papers from the ASLA symposium in Gothenburg, 23–24 April, 2020*. (ASLA:s skriftserie 28.) 131–154. Gothenburg: Svenska föreningen för tillämpad språkvetenskap (ASLA).

Mufwene, Salikoko S. 2013. Globalization, global English, and world English(es): Myths and facts. In Nikolas Coupland (ed.), *The Handbook of Language and Globalization*. Chichester, West Sussex, England: Wiley-Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444324068.ch1

Peck, Amiena & Christopher Stroud. 2015. Skinscapes. *Linguistic Landscape* 1(1/2), 133–151. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.1.1-2.08pec

Pennycook, Alastair. 1994. *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. London: Longman.

Pennycook, Alastair. 2009. Linguistic landscapes and the transgressive semiotics of graffiti. In Elana Shohamy & Durk Gorter (eds.), *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery*. 302–312. New York/London: Routledge.

Pennycook, Alastair & Emi Otsuji. 2015. Making scents of the landscape. *Linguistic Landscape* 1(3), 181–212. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.1.3.01pen

Pütz, Martin & Neele Mundt (eds.). 2018. *Expanding the Linguistic Landscape: Linguistic Diversity, Multimodality and the Use of Space as a Semiotic Resource*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788922166

Reh, Mechtild. 2004. Multilingual writing. A reader-oriented typology – with examples from Lira Municipality (Uganda). *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 170, 1–41. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2004.2004.170.1

Robertson, Roland. 2012. Globalisation or glocalisation? *Journal of International Communication* 18(2), 191–208. https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2012.709925

Rudby, Rani & Selim Ben Said (eds.). 2015. *Conflict, Exclusion and Dissent in the Linguistic Landscape*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137426284

Scollon, Ron & Suzie Wong Scollon. 2003. *Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203422724

Sharifian, Farzad. 2016. "Glocalisation" of the English language: A cultural linguistics perspective. *KEMANUSIAAN the Asian Journal of Humanities* 23(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2016.23.s2.1

Shohamy, Elana, Eliezer Ben-Rafael & Monica Barni (eds.). 2010. *Linguistic Landscape in the City*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847692993

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Shohamy, Elana & Durk Gorter (eds.). 2009. *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203930960

Shohamy, Elana, Martin Pütz & Neele Mundt (eds.). 2018. *Linguistic Landscape after a Decade: An Overview of Themes, Debates and Future Directions*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788922166-004

Soukup, Barbara. 2020. Survey area selection in Variationist Linguistic Landscape study (VaLLS): A report from Vienna, Austria. *Linguistic Landscape* 6(1), 52–79. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.00017.sou

Spolsky, Bernard. 2009. Prolegomena to a sociolinguistic theory of public signage. In Elana Shohamy & Durk Gorter (eds.), *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*. 25–39. New York: Routledge.

Troyer, Robert A. 2023. Linguistic Landscape Bibliography. Accessed 14 September 2023. https://www.zotero.org/groups/216092/linguistic_landscape_bibliography

Vandenbroucke, Mieke. 2015. Language visibility, functionality and meaning across various TimeSpace scales in Brussels' multilingual landscapes. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 36(2), 163–181. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.909442

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

7. Affect and Responsibility in the Pandemic

New Attitudes in the Linguistic Landscape of Milan

MARIA VITTORIA CALVI
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2328-4830

MARCELLA UBERTI-BONA
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6573-6922

In the wake of what Eckert (2012) calls the 'third wave of sociolinguistics', which focuses on the dynamic interplay between linguistic practices and the social landscape, the study of linguistic landscapes (LL hereafter) has undergone a critical turn (Barni & Bagna 2015) in focusing on the aspects that make it an indicator (and a producer) of social change or differentiation (Blommaert 2013). Actors in the LL manifest their agency through linguistic/semiotic mechanisms such as language choice, and the use of multimodal displays (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010). Such actions create (or replace) indexical and value orders on different spatiotemporal scales (Blommaert 2015), entering into a dynamic relationship with the social context. In this way, individuals also negotiate and redefine their identities (Blackwood, Lanza & Woldemariam 2016), moving between the limits and possibilities of the context (the place and its 'rules'), which in turn is influenced by their relationships and affiliations. Thus, the communities to which they belong are changed or redefined by the practices, attributes and symbolic projections of their members (Gaiser & Matras 2020).

The critical turn that marked the transition from quantitative to mainly qualitative research (Shohamy & Gorter 2009) proved to be useful in the study of LLs in contemporary global urban agglomerations (Sassen 2005), characterised by high levels of superdiversity (Vertovec 2007) attributable to the presence of immigrant communities, as well as widespread informal multilingualism that is not always recognised in official policies. From this perspective, language choice in the LL could be interpreted as an assumption of responsibility by the social actors involved (Siragusa & Ferguson 2020a) for their community and the host society. Language choice legitimises the use of minority languages in public space, and establishes emotional connectedness with the homeland (Breier 2020). On the other hand, recent research on LLs has explored how affect emerges from contexts and how space may be affectively charged (Wee 2016; Wee & Goh 2019; Motschenbacher 2020; Yao 2020).

As a further element of complexity, social actions occur in online as well as offline spaces, and local signs may refer to the online public sphere. Thus, the LL could be better understood 'as part of a network of texts (online/offline), mediated practices, artefacts, experiences and semiotics' (Maly & Blommaert 2019: 19). The pandemic accelerated this process and strengthened the online/offline nexus, especially in the case of transnationally connected migrant communities. Moreover, it generated an immediate sense of crisis and disruption that affected all aspects of daily life, thereby arousing feelings of anxiety and fear, as well as challenging the sense of collective identity, especially in the most vulnerable communities (Demertzis & Eyerman 2020).

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Many immigrants experienced economic, health and logistical difficulties in their lives, as well as being very concerned about, and involved in, what was happening in their countries of origin. They were caught between the ever-changing rules imposed by institutions during the different phases of the emergency and the emotional, cultural and utilitarian loyalties to their own communities, and they had to make important choices in a very short timeframe. The speed of these changes emerged particularly in the commercial LL, the subject of the study reported here, as shops and restaurants were affected the most by the different lockdown arrangements and had to find solutions so as to maintain contact with customers and preserve their businesses.

Our research aim is to study how the trauma of the pandemic changed the LL of migration in Milan with regard to two main aspects: first, how the emotions connected to the pandemic were displayed in the commercial LL and secondly, which linguistic practices migrants adopted in the LL in order to negotiate their position towards the host society and towards the communities they belong to. In other words, we intend to examine the actions and discursive processes put in place by social actors in reaction to the crisis and the linguistic/semiotic resources that distinguish the new affective regimes that are visible in the commercial LL of migration. We thus aim to show the relevance of these aspects from the perspective of sociolinguistic variation.

After briefly outlining the context of migration in Milan, we will focus on our theoretical and methodological framework. The subsequent analysis addresses the transformations linked to the pandemic, in both the physical and the virtual LL associated with it, during the main phases identified from February 2020 to June 2021. Finally, in the concluding remarks, we discuss the main results, and the limits and strengths of the mixed methodological approach developed during the research process.

7.1 The Sociolinguistic Context

The first waves of immigration to Italy date back to the 1980s. They became substantial in the 2000s, leading to what is now a stable balance of around five million (8.3% of the total population). Foreign nationals are mainly concentrated in the north, particularly in Lombardy where 1,150,000 of them live (23% of the total). Of these, 250,000 (22%) are in the Municipality of Milan, where they represent 18 per cent of the population. Moreover, Milan and its surroundings have the largest number of foreign-owned enterprises in Italy (50,959, which is 10% of the total), most of which are shops specifically within the commercial sector under study. Despite being among the worst affected by the pandemic, the Milan region saw an increase of 1.5 per cent in new start-ups during the year 2020, against a reduction of 0.8 per cent on the national level.[1]

1. All the data in this section were retrieved from the statistics page of the City Council of Milan: http://sisi.comune.milano.it/, and from two groups of reports on immigration published by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy: https://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/Pagine/La-presenza-dei-migranti-nelle-aree-metropolitane-online-i-rapporti.aspx and https://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/Pagine/Pubblicati-i-rapporti-2020-Le-comunita-migranti-in-Italia.aspx (all the webpages mentioned were last consulted on 12 May 2022).

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Table 1. The countries of origin of foreign-born residents in the Municipality of Milan

		31/12/2019	31/12/2020
1	Philippines	41,557	40,990
2	Egypt	41,387	40,897
3	China	32,538	32,798
4	Peru	18,084	17,589
5	Sri Lanka	17,492	17,427
6	Romania	15,564	15,360
7	Ecuador	11,993	11,513
8	Bangladesh	10,429	10,488
9	Ukraine	8,806	8,632
10	Morocco	8,380	8,259
TOT.	**All foreign-born residents**	**281,582**	**280,310**

Turning to the main ethnolinguistic groups present in the municipality of Milan, Table 1 lists the top ten nationalities, which remained unchanged during 2020.

Changing focus from nationalities to language groups reveals that Arabic speakers (mainly Egyptians) comprise the largest community, they are very active in the commercial sector and are visible in the LL of Milan. Closely following them are Spanish-speaking communities from Latin American countries (hereafter LAs), mainly comprising Peruvians and Ecuadorians, to which may be added another 12,673 Spanish-speaking LAs (mainly from El Salvador, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Colombia). In third position are Filipinos, but their almost exclusive employment in the domestic sector and their very low level of entrepreneurship, as registered in the reports of the Ministry of Labour, make them scarcely visible in the commercial LL. The fourth-biggest language community is the Chinese, historically rooted in a single neighbourhood (the Via Paolo Sarpi area) and now very active in a number of commercial sectors (trading in low-cost household goods and clothing, electronic repairs and catering) throughout the city.

Arab-speaking and Chinese-speaking communities are characterised by a strong commercial vocation. LAs have less of a presence in the business sector, but they are highly visible in the LL because they offer products and services primarily to members of their own community (restaurants, hairdressers, travel agencies, organisers of events and celebrations, for example). Thereby they emphasise aspects of identity at the same time as targeting Italian customers by playing on their linguistic affinity and certain cultural traits that Italians appreciate, such as music and good food (Calvi & Uberti-Bona 2020; Calvi 2021).

Finally, we will give some spatial references regarding the presence of foreign-owned shops in Milan. The city is administratively divided into nine main zones and, on a lower level, 88 neighbourhoods. In this spatial grid, such shops are distributed in a polycentric manner in the peripheral belt, peaking in the area of Via Padova (northern suburbs) with its concentration of Spanish-language business activities (mainly catering and entertainment).

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

7.2 The Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Previous research on the commercial LL of migration in Milan has highlighted the continuous process of negotiating identities and meanings between shopkeepers and the public by means of a wide repertoire of linguistic and semiotic resources. Attitudes vary according to the different communities, the distance between their languages and Italian, and the commercial sector in question. The presence of culturally marked signs is very strong, especially in the case of LA restaurants (Uberti-Bona 2016; Calvi 2021), consistent with the high degree of sociability of these groups and the affective values associated with food, especially in migration contexts (Bagna & Machetti 2012; Yao 2020). Moreover, the collective linguistic practices (Siragusa & Ferguson 2020b: 10) that develop within the spaces delimited by the LL in which the use of immigrant languages is legitimised, can support individual responsibility in language choice (Calvi 2020).

7.2.1 Methodological Aspects

On the operational level, in our research on the commercial LL of immigration, and from the perspective of LL as social action, our unit of analysis is the *shop* (which falls within the *marketplace* category as defined by Kallen 2010; see also Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 in this volume). This includes all the signs that are visible or exposed to the public, possibly distributed over several subunits (shop windows, interiors), by a single actor (always the shopkeeper) (Cenoz & Gorter 2006). The COVID-19 signs follow the guidelines issued by the authorities, for instance, and many are ready-printed (*top-down*), but they must be seen in the *bottom-up* business context created by the shopkeeper.

The pandemic posed a challenge to research on the LL, and we had to find alternative paths (see also Chapter 2, Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 in this volume). The main qualitative tools normally used in such research include the collection and analysis of LL images and ethnographic interviews. During the pandemic, however, it was not possible to collect images systematically, and it was equally impossible to conduct interviews face-to-face (Chan et al. 2020). This apparent drawback prompted us to develop a more complex and more comprehensive approach commensurate with the situation, within the framework of what has been called *blindsight ethnography*, i.e. 'detecting phenomena by observing related things around them' (Hidalgo & Kahn 2020: 188).

To identify the most representative units we compared the different images and other materials with each other and with those previously collected, trying to identify emerging phenomena and the most appropriate categories in which to analyse them in continuous back-and-forth movement from data to theory. In other words, we adapted the methodological and theoretical framework to the object of study, on a level of analytical flexibility and simultaneity inspired by the Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2006). We related different elements drawn from different channels, at different times and in different language groups. This spiral process also allowed us to integrate the increasingly interconnected data of the 'offline' LL with those of the 'online' LL (Blommaert & Maly 2019; Gorter & Cenoz 2020) of social networks, and Facebook in particular, on which shopkeepers were trying to maintain their workflow and their contact with customers during lockdown.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

7.2.2 Responsibility and Affective Regimes

With regard to the theoretical framework, we considered the concept of *responsibility* particularly suitable for explaining changes in linguistic practice caused by the pandemic: indeed, responsibility should be understood, first and foremost, as 'the ability to respond, or mount a response to a situation at hand' (Siragusa & Ferguson 2020b: 10). When the pandemic broke out, the LL revealed the linguistic practices migrants adopted to negotiate their position vis-à-vis the society in which they lived, but also vis-à-vis the community to which they belonged and their country of origin.

From a broader perspective, the concept of responsibility has a social dimension linked to the actions and discursive processes put in place by social actors in reaction to the crisis, and in negotiating its cultural meaning (Alexander 2004; Demertzis & Eyerman 2020). Shopkeepers are aware of the influence they may exert on the community and therefore assume responsibility as mediators between institutions and their customers. They promote respect for the rules, while also trying to rebuild the sense of community that the pandemic challenged.

This assumption of responsibility on the part of shopkeepers is a reaction both to the social pressure exerted by the authorities, including on a discursive level ('stay at home'), and to economic factors. This is supplemented with an affective dimension comprising the values, feelings and atmospheres (Böhme 2017; Androutsopoulos & Deumert 2021) experienced, shared and negotiated among the entire community. Precisely because of its collective dimension, the LL is a very sensitive indicator of the discursive processes by which different communities try to make sense of unexpected events that affect interpersonal relationships.

The traumatic aspect of the pandemic also prompted us to study how emotions were displayed in the LL. Based on the collective dimension of emotions and affective practices (Wetherell 2012), the notion of *affective regime* is particularly well-suited to putting affect in place, and, as noted above, it is an emerging concept in LL research. Wee (2016) explores this link between space and affect in his seminal study, proposing the concept of affective regime, 'a set of conditions that govern with varying degrees of hegemonic status the ways in which particular kinds of affect can be appropriately materialized in the context of a given site' (Wee 2016: 109).

The displaying of COVID-19 rules constrained the affective regime of all public places during the pandemic. However, the degree of formalisation varied, being highest in institutional sites such as schools, airports and hospitals, and lower in shops where there is a wide range of individual solutions and unofficial signs. In the case of shops, instructions about appropriate behaviour based on legal requirements are somehow mediated by a general orientation towards respect and care for others and an appeal to the shared values and experiences of the immigrant community.

7.2.3 Classification Criteria and Data

Over time we have recorded significant variation both on the linguistic level (e.g., language choice and vocabulary) and with regard to the affective aspects and symbolic values associated with the various signs, as well as to the level of awareness, intentionality and responsibility of those who produced them. We therefore considered the dynamic dimension of LL, which is manifest through different chronotopes (Blommaert 2015).

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Our data were collected in three of the main multi-ethnic neighbourhoods of Milan (Via Padova, Baggio and Lorenteggio, located respectively in the northern, western and south-western suburbs). The dataset comprises more than 900 photographs from approximately 130 units, taken at different times during the pandemic, approximately 400 posts from 40 Facebook pages, as well as 12 interviews conducted in April 2021. The data mainly concern the Latin American LL, but also include images of shops run by Chinese, Filipinos and other communities.

We classified and cross-referenced the data following the development of the crisis in public health, taking into account several contextual aspects. The chronological axis was the main factor influencing data collection and the type of items available. We were able to identify three main phases or waves: the first and most severe lockdown in spring 2020; the long period of the continual opening and closing of businesses, from June 2020 to March/April 2021; and the more extensive re-openings after the release of the vaccine, between May and June 2021.

Other criteria for classifying the data included the channel through which they were collected (physical LL, Facebook, interviews); the product categories concerned, affecting communication strategies; and the different ethno-linguistic communities involved. We thus related the evolution of the most significant features of the context to the linguistic, discursive or indexical aspects emerging in the LL units.

In the first phase, it was only possible to collect a couple of dozen photos in short shopping trips in the period from 24 February to 9 March 2020, in the Baggio area, while in early May 2020, it was possible to collect around fifty photos in the Lorenteggio area just before the first reopenings; in total, the photos of the first phase portray between twenty and thirty shops run by foreigners in the two areas. In the same period, we started to collect the Facebook posts of around thirty shops. In the opening moments of the second phase, we collected around 300 photographs, in particular of about thirty LA shops in the Via Padova area, as well as an increasing number of Facebook posts. Finally, in the third phase, we were able to carry out the fieldwork more systematically, again in the Via Padova area, collecting over 400 photographs of some eighty shops run by foreigners of all nationalities, including the 12 interviews with shopkeepers.

In what follows, the analysis of the data will be based on the chronological criterion indicated above, and will therefore be divided into three sections corresponding to the three main epidemic waves.

7.3 The First Wave: Fear and Solidarity

Italy, and in particular Lombardy, was the first European country to be afflicted by the outbreak of a new coronavirus that developed in China at the end of 2019. The first Italian patient, a man from the small town of Codogno near Milan, was hospitalised and in a serious condition on 21 February 2020. Hospitalisations grew exponentially over the next two days, leading on 23 February to the 'closure' of eleven small towns in Lombardy and Veneto, the closure of all schools and universities in Lombardy from 24 February, and finally to the hard national lockdown from 9 March until early May. Places re-opened progressively during the month. This phase was characterised by the shock of the shutdown, which rendered the LL suddenly silent, but also by the

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

emergence of new attitudes of shopkeepers towards customers, new discourses and new affective regimes.

The Chinese were the first foreign-born traders to react to the situation, closing their shops even before the official lockdown was in place, perhaps to protect themselves from possible aggression given that the outbreak of the pandemic provoked an immediate surge of anti-Asian racism (Blommaert 2020). In those early days it was still possible to collect a few examples of the signs displayed by Chinese traders in the Baggio area. This material is sparse, but it is extremely interesting in terms of grasping the first transformations of the LL produced by the pandemic.

All the signs were in Italian, and they all conveyed the idea of an unexpected situation perceived as very temporary. Most notices only announced closure for the

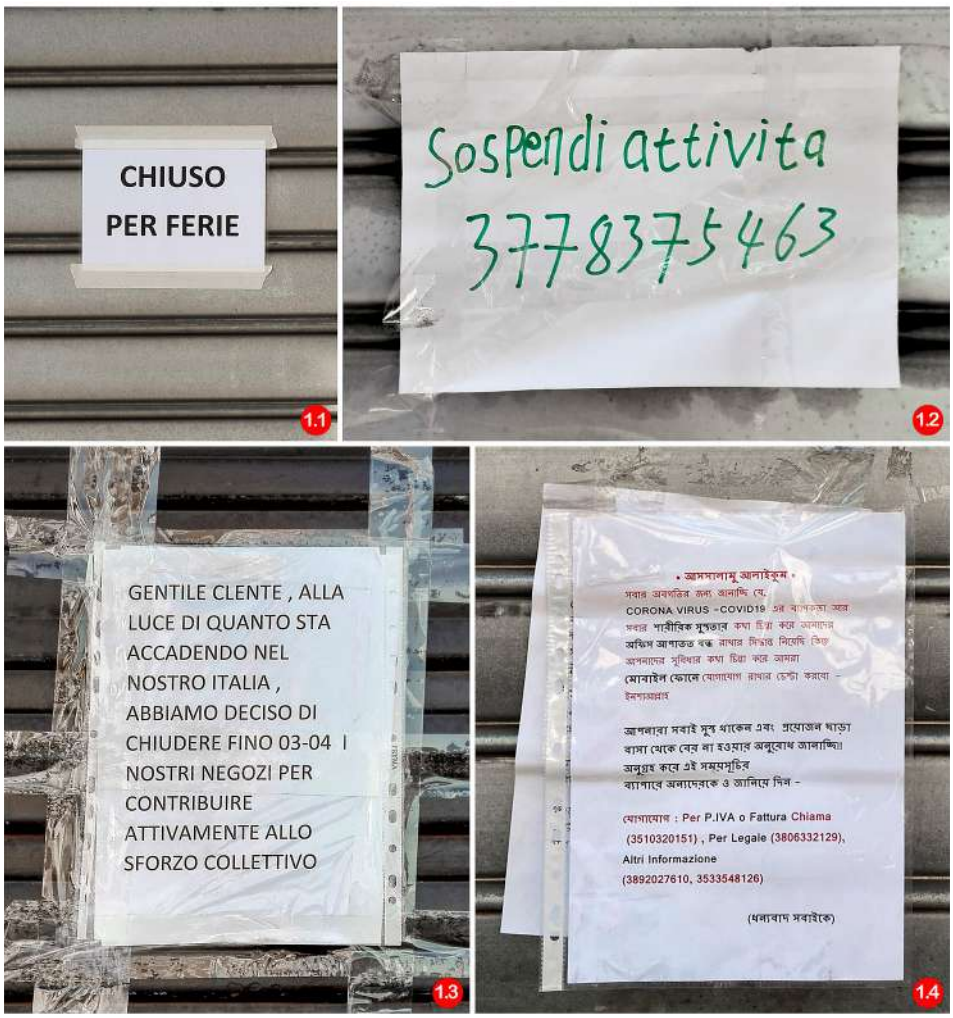

Figure 1. Image 1.1. Closure notice of the Chinese tailor shop *Sartoria Riparazione*. Image 1.2. Closure notice of the Chinese massage parlour *Ragazza d'oro*. Image 1.3. Closure notice of the Chinese cafeteria *Jackpot*. Image 1.4. Closure notice of the Bengali service centre *Crosspoint*. Pictures: Marcella Uberti-Bona.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

holidays, or the 'suspension' of activity (Figure 1, Images 1.1 and 1.2). Others offered brief explanations for the closure (*a causa della situazione sanitaria* 'due to the health situation') and apologised for the inconvenience caused to customers.

Notices such as the one visible in Figure 1 (Image 1.3) are particularly interesting as an innovative element of the LL. In fact, here the Italian language was not used as a 'mimetic' strategy to attract customers with various origins (Uberti-Bona 2016), it rather denoted a sense of belonging to the general community and the sharing of a collective responsibility. The shopkeeper *positions* (Davies & Harré 1990; Martin & White 2005) himself on the side of all the actors involved in the fight against the pandemic, either by means of an inclusive 'we' referring to the host community (*quanto sta accadendo nel nostro Italia*, 'what is happening in our Italy'), or by means of a 'we' referring to shopkeepers (*I nostri negozi*, 'our shops'), which underlines their agency (*per contribuire attivamente allo sforzo collettivo*, 'to contribute actively to the collective effort'). In this way, shopkeepers take responsibility in relation to the place in which they live. An affective regime of solidarity as a value is established to counteract the fear generated by the pandemic, emphasising that feelings of solidarity (and responsible behaviour) are desirable. This aspect, emerging from the LL, is consistent with the spread during the pandemic of peer-to-peer solidarity networks as an alternative to charitable forms of solidarity (Sitrin & Colectiva Sembrar 2020).

Some essential businesses continued their activities amidst severe restrictions during the lockdown, communicating their new business arrangements by means of notices attached to the lowered shutters, such as *Noi lavoriamo in casa per la sicurezza di tutti*, 'we are working from home for everyone's safety' (Money transfer *Floris Remittance Service*, Filipinos, Via Rismondo, March). The same pattern was repeated on other notices during this period, some of which are in languages other than Italian, such as Bengali (see Figure 1, Image 1.4: 'Assalamu Alaikum and for everyone's information, we have decided to close our office for the time being due to COVID-19 and for the physical well-being of everyone, but we are thinking of your convenience. Try to keep in touch by mobile phone Insha 'Allah you are all healthy and I request you not to leave home unnecessarily. Please take note of this Let others know about it too. Thanks everyone'). The different language choice targets interlocutors who may have difficulties accessing the Italian language[2] and who share the same religious values (note the Muslim greeting formulae).

At the same time, many shopkeepers began to reinforce their presence in the virtual LL of social networks, developing their social action and solidarity practices. The invisible lines that connect the physical with the virtual LL (Blommaert & Maly 2019) thus acquired new value. Our research also moved in this direction. We found plenty of material posted on Facebook by LA shopkeepers, who were already active on it before the pandemic as an extension of their commercial activity. We did not find as many signs of active presence among the other two main communities of foreign-born traders in Milan, namely the Chinese and Arabic-speaking North Africans, and we assume that they used other channels.

Many LA shop owners posted both commercial announcements concerning

2. Hopkyns & van den Hoven (2022) tackle the issue of inequalities linked to the lack of accessible information in contexts of strong linguistic diversity, in the case of COVID-19 signage in two Abu Dhabi work contexts.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

delivery services and comments on the situations in Italy and Latin America, urging the community to participate in aid initiatives, and sharing news on the COVID-19 situation in Peru and Ecuador in particular.

The innovative element in the home-delivery service that many small venues had previously introduced was the contextual referencing to the lockdown, which emphasised the service as a form of active solidarity, but also as a way of building customer loyalty by adding an emotional element. For instance, the *El Hornero* restaurant promoted the dish with the highest identity value for Peruvian customers (*pollo a la brasa*, 'charcoal-grilled chicken') on its Facebook page using its Spanish name within a discourse in Italian, together with the Peruvian flag as a strong identity marker (and a large image of a chicken):

1) In quarantena, il pollo a la brasa ti aspetta! 🍽️🇵🇪
Ti portiamo il miglior pollo alla brace di Milano a casa tua!

('During your quarantine grilled chicken is waiting for you! We will bring the best charcoal-grilled chicken to your home!') (El Hornero, 15/04/2020)

We should also note the use of *proximity devices* (Caffi & Janney 1994), i.e. the different linguistic strategies (here the use of the familiar form of address *tú*) expressing affective closeness between the speaker and the interlocutor. This was a distinctive feature of the Latin American LL even before the pandemic (Calvi 2021), but during the lockdown it responded to an increased need for proximity and solidarity.

These values are expressed in the use of the Spanish language and of the inclusive 'we', but always within a polyphonic discourse encompassing community membership, expected behaviour and feelings (the call for unity in the following example), the voice of authority and a positive attitude towards the host country (underlined by the Italian flag):

2) 🙏🇪🇨🇵🇪🇨🇴🇨🇺🇧🇷🇩🇴🇩🇴🇧🇴🇸🇻🇨🇱🇺🇾🇻🇪😍🇮🇹
En éste momento, tenemos que estar más unidos que nunca y respetar las normas de las Autoridades solo asi podremos vencer este enemigo inviible [sic]
🇪🇨🇵🇪🇨🇴🇨🇺🇧🇷🇩🇴🇩🇴🇧🇴🇸🇻🇨🇱🇺🇾🇻🇪

('At this moment we have to be more united than ever and respect the rules of the Authorities, this is the only way we will be able to defeat this invisible enemy') (Mundo Latino, 17/03/2020)

Other shopkeepers developed their agency in the sphere of solidarity by promoting various initiatives, such as *Un latino ayuda a un latino* ('One Latino helps another': *Las Brisas del Perù*, 23/04/2020), and *Almuerzo solidario* ('Solidarity meal': *La olla de barro*, 16/04/2020), cooking meals offered by customers to LAs in economic difficulty. They also organised promotional events live on Facebook as well as small lotteries, but the main topic (explicit or implicit) in the interaction with the public was always the strong concern about the pandemic, both in Italy and in Latin America. In this way, they contributed to giving a sense of 'place' (Scollon & Scollon 2003; Cresswell 2015) to the virtual LL, and to the construction of an affective regime based on solidarity and collective responsibility (Chouliaraki 2018: 264).

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

7.4 The Second Wave: Social Rules and Community Belonging

From May 2020, when gradual reopening was being envisaged, messages in the physical as well as the virtual LL became more commercial in nature (opening dates and hours, contact numbers, new services offered), particularly mentioning the safety measures deployed. Appeals for unity and solidarity among Latin Americans and for compliance with the rules issued by the Italian government (such as social distancing and the use of face masks) were reiterated. This was particularly prevalent during the second pandemic wave from November 2020 until February 2021, which was worse than the first and again concentrated in northern regions.

The succession of openings and closures during this period allowed us to do some image collection but also directed our research more decisively to the Facebook pages of foreign-born shopkeepers, particularly LA restaurateurs who tightened the offline/online nexus of communication to minimise the damage done by closing (Blommaert 2019; Maly & Blommaert 2019).

We observed the persistence of an affective regime promoting attitudes of solidarity and community membership in the physical LL, but also the emergence of new phenomena and new discourses, specifically the presence of a large number of signs detailing safety measures. By displaying these signs the shopkeeper acts as a mediator between the voices of the authorities and the public. An affective regime promoting respect for the rules is thus imposed, addressed to both the ethnic community, as a way of encouraging responsible behaviours, and the host country, as a way of reassuring the majority population about the same. However, the instructional role of the texts is somewhat mitigated, such as by using personal forms of address. Thus, respect for rules is reinterpreted as a form of solidarity and commitment to others.

The second innovative element of this period was the prominence of signs announcing various forms of take-away services – when they were permitted – and delivery. These signs, not new in themselves, now dominated the display, showing an obvious promotional purpose, but also an emotional connection with the community. In other words, the *broader atmosphere* (Phyak & Sharma 2021) of the pandemic increases the 'affective potentials of the concrete semiotic resources in perceived space' (Björkvall, Van Meerbergen & Westberg 2020: 4).

On Facebook, at the same time, posts about openings, closures, home deliveries and takeaways created a strong link with the physical place to which they referred, whereas affective and value interactions acquired their own characteristics on account of the different medium. Thus, posts and comments constructed time-space configurations, or 'places', in which solidarity is explicitly linked to a sense of belonging and ethnic identity, 'lodging such identities firmly in highly specific, circumscribable chronotopic forms of context' (Blommaert 2019: 486).

In the following we analyse some examples of the main innovations during this period.

The window of the Peruvian food shop *Perú alimenta* (Figure 2) shows how innovative elements are embedded in the pre-existing affective regime, oriented towards nostalgia for the country of origin and its gastronomic traditions, as is typical of food-related activities (Yao 2020; Calvi 2021). It shows the same identity references to the country of origin as before the pandemic (Calvi 2016): the logos of Peru and 'made in Peru', the motto in Spanish, *Un rinconcito de Perù en Milano* ('A little corner

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

of Peru in Milan'), and the name of the importing company (*Peru alimenta*, 'Peru feeds') that represents a 'nurturing' homeland for LAs. The multimodal composition integrates identity assertion and commercial promotion by flaunting the geographical origin and the collective memory through objects of nostalgic sensibility as symbols of belonging, and as guarantees of authenticity (Yao 2020).

In addition, the signs with COVID-19 rules (the requirement to wear a mask and the number of customers allowed) orient shoppers to new attitudes and values, which then make up the affective regime of the place. All the signs are in Italian and appear in different versions (Figure 2, Image 2.2). The presumably older ones, handwritten, probably in haste as food shops remained open throughout the lockdown, have short texts: s*empre usare la mascherina, grazie*, 'always use a mask, thank you'; and *possono entrare 2 persone, ringraziamo per la collaborazione*, 'only 2 people may enter, we thank you for your cooperation'. The most recent ones are also self-produced but with the help of a computer and a printer. By replicating these signs calling for compliance the shopkeeper takes a clear position as a mediator between the authorities and the community to which he belongs, making the societal discourse his own (the stipulations are signed in the name of the shop) and adapting it to the recipient with proximity devices (Caffi & Janney 1994) (marked in bold): *la mascherina è la* ***nostra*** *principale protezione* ***usiamola*** *sempre nel modo corretto coprendo bene anche il naso, Perualimento* ***tu*** *mercado*, 'masks are **our** main protection, **let's** always use them correctly, covering the nose well, Perualimento, **your** market'.

Figure 2. Image 2.1. The window of the shop *Peru alimenta*. Image 2.2. A detail of the window of the shop *Peru alimenta*. Pictures: Maria Vittoria Calvi.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Figure 3. Notice of the Pakistani money transfer shop *Universal Services*. Picture: Marcella Uberti-Bona.

Alongside these signs are others (three notices about new products, a poster about the presidential elections in Peru in September 2020 and a sign offering a service – *barman en tu casa*, ('a barman in your house'), which tend to revive the link with the country of origin through the exclusive use of Spanish. The election sign signals a commitment to remain involved in the political affairs of the country of origin (Boccagni 2008), whereas the notice about the bar service is linked to the pandemic emergency, here evoked in a non-explicit way. These allusive points of view (García Negroni 2019) contextualise the communication, but aim to counterbalance the negative emotions aroused by the pandemic.

There is also a poster, now almost completely covered by other signs, advertising a pre-COVID-19 music event. This stratification recalls different contexts and dynamically connects different chronotopes (Blommaert 2015) and affective regimes.

A different type of 'personalisation' of COVID-19 signs was photographed in a Pakistani shop offering money-transfer services (Figure 3). In sharp contrast to the shop's product category, its window display includes various exotic products (bottles of cosmetics, coconut oil and spices), imported from different geographical areas. There are no specific references to Pakistani gastronomy or other cultural traits, nor to the Muslim religion, and there are no texts in Urdu. The sign is an ordinary A4 computer-generated sheet, illustrated with flowers and small animals in different colours both in the background and in the printed characters, with shadow and three-dimensional effects applied to the word *avviso* ('notice'). The text is written in almost incomprehensible Italian, an obvious 'translation' from the language of

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

the shopkeeper, without resorting to standard formulae: *Avviso. Si prego entrate uno alla volta al negozio. Metter un metero di distanza tra uno dal altro. Grazie* ('Notice. Please enter the store one at a time. Keep a one-meter distance between one another. Thank you'). The overall effect, precisely because it is so linguistically distant from the standard, shows the retailer's intention to mediate the official and bureaucratic language of generic anti-COVID notices by creating a more personal communication to connect with customers. Moreover, the aesthetic canon of the non-verbal elements of the sign creates a scenic atmosphere, or *tuned space* (Böhme 2017: 162), that constitutes an indexical reference to typical Pakistani street shops, reproducing their taste for the colourful and decorative juxtaposition of a multitude of products.

We will now give an example of the prominence of delivery and takeaway services offering safe and supportive solutions and influencing the *atmosphere* of the place (Böhme 2017), thereby reinforcing the social experiences and everyday practices that are best aligned with its affective regime (Androutsopoulos & Deumert 2021). The *Criollo II* Peruvian restaurant offers a typical takeaway menu (*pollo a la brasa* and Inka Cola), in the following words: *En los tiempos difíciles te lo hacemos fácil*, 'In difficult times we make it easy for you' (Figure 4). The image of the chicken is similar to those displayed before the pandemic, but the phrase adds an implicit reference to the pandemic ('difficult times') as well as the need for responsible behaviour and supportive help ('we make it easy for you').

Figure 4. The window of the restaurant *Criollo*. Picture: Maria Vittoria Calvi.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

As noted above, there is a polyphony of voices (including shopkeepers, the authorities, ethnic organisations and third-party entrepreneurs) in the physical LL that express belonging to a migrant community as solidarity, in the sense of mutual aid, an active link with the country of origin and loyalty to the host country. The rules are presented as guaranteeing security for the community and the actors involved.

The activity of LA restaurateurs in the virtual LL intensified during this phase, thus connecting the physical place in which the dishes are produced with the living contexts of the customers as well as with the distant space of the countries of origin. This change in communication channel opened up a further perspective for our research. Like any virtual LL, Facebook's LL is more verbally articulate, makes greater use of the expressive medium of emoticons and other audio-visual resources, and promotes customer reactions and interactions. We could therefore indirectly capture some of the symbolic tools involved in the construction of a specific spacetime configuration and its affective regime, within the framework of blindsight ethnography (Hidalgo & Kahn 2020), collecting, at the same time, some of the observers' reactions to the LL.

In real space, the restaurant is at the centre of a circle of which the radius is the distance up to which deliveries can be made. The shop windows include multiple references to the venue's Facebook page, and to the links needed to order online. For its part, the Facebook page is a window onto the restaurant, showing photographs of the interior and the clientele (when it was open), and repeating addresses, phone numbers and menus, for example.

The affective regime of solidarity is always present on the Facebook pages of LA restaurants, thanks to the high frequency of keywords such as *patria*, *comunidad*, *unidos*, *bendiciones* ('homeland', 'community', 'united', 'blessings'), mainly used in Spanish.

On 7 June 2020, for example, the restaurant *Las brisas del Peru* posted a promotional message accompanied by a photograph of a girl standing outside the restaurant and holding an advertisement (Figure 5). It reads: 'Good morning [sun emoticon]. Not only do we try to offer you the #best seasonings, but we also #work to ensure that you have a pleasant #experience [heart emoticon]. We look forward to serving you from 12 o'clock. #LasBrisasDelPerú'.

The image triggered an immediate response from one customer, who criticised the inappropriate behaviour of the girl: *Que paso [sic] no tiene mascarilla la muchacha* ('What's going on? The girl is not wearing a mask'). Another customer responds, reassuring the complainant and explaining that the photograph was old (or more precisely, that it belonged to a pre-pandemic chronotope):

3) Son fotos pasadas La modelo es del 2017 qndi kien es asiduo sabe k se come bien 😁👍

('They are old photos The model is from 2017 so regular customers will know that you'll eat well') (Las Brisas Del Peru, 6/7/2020)

Thus, customers react to this online semiotic stimulus (the photograph of a girl without a mask) as if the 'transgression' had occurred in the real, offline world: the Facebook page is perceived as a physical space or, better, as a (chronotopic) 'place' in which social interaction directs, promotes or censors certain types of behaviour, evaluating them morally (Blommaert 2019).

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Figure 5. A Facebook post by the restaurant *Las brisas del Peru*.

7.5 The Third Wave: Cautious Hope

As the second and more serious pandemic wave came to an end in April 2021 the government began to plan a series of gradual 're-openings'. These new conditions allowed us to carry out some fieldwork activities aimed at verifying the changes that occurred over time, the discourses that were evoked through the embodied affective practices (Wetherell 2012) and how they related to the materiality of place (Yao 2020: 9). We were also able to interview some shopkeepers, and to observe their semiotic choices from a different, ethnographic perspective.

Again, during this phase COVID-19 signage constituted the most significant sign genre in our research – sign genres meaning 'functional classes of signs that draw on similar resources and arrangements to accomplish a socially typified communicative act' (Androutsopoulos & Deumert 2021: 166). These signs were ubiquitous, although now overshadowed by messages about reopening logistics, such as opening days and hours, menus, as well as references to online delivery sites or QR codes for menu downloads. It is precisely the latter (characteristically small stickers showing the logos of the online networks) that showed how the offline/online nexus was now fully consolidated. Both channels (the material shop and its virtual location on Facebook) reinforced the identity of the place, which now included a hopeful and resilient orientation towards the full resumption of activities and of community relations.

COVID-19 signs tended to be standard messages in Italian, or translated into the language of the shopkeeper (mainly Arabic, Bengali, Sinhalese and Tamil). Some were homemade, the enunciation of the rules being inserted into an affective regime to foster a sense of solidarity and security and the hope of being able to resume the

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

social habits of the community. This return to previous habits could be described as reparation of a kind to make amends for what was hitherto felt like 'compressed cultural trauma', meaning 'that the trauma drama begins immediately, but makes no prediction that it will result in indelible marks on the social body' (Demertzis & Eyerman 2020: 22). The trauma discourse takes place almost virtually in this digital age of instantaneous communication, thus becoming more fluid and unpredictable, as well as rapid.

For instance, the whole display in the recently launched *El Pikeito* restaurant (Figure 6) is an explosion of Peruvian cultural signs, starting with the choice of language, almost exclusively Spanish, and the food images. On the street are four easels with colourful handwritten drawings, and a tall, printed sign advertising typical Peruvian dishes. The shop sign (*Pikeito autentico sabor peruano*, 'Pikeito authentic Peruvian flavour') and the window with the shop's motto prominently displayed at the top and repeated on one of the blackboards (*El Pikeito donde se come rico y se paga poquito*, 'El Pikeito, where you eat well and pay little'), appeal to the tastes (and budgets) of the LA clientele, in stark contrast to the period of closed shops and empty streets. The shop window and glass door are littered with stickers containing all the information needed for food orders. COVID-19 signs, in contrast, are concentrated on the glass door, being less visible when it is open inwards. However, a purple sticker is clearly visible in a central position on both the door and the shop window (Figure 6, Image 2). The text, in Italian, is the same in both notices: *Per favore mantieni la distanza di sicurezza* ('Please maintain social distance'), but the orientation towards the interlocutor through the familiar form of address signals not only respect for the rules but also the re-institution of convivial practices that are typical in restaurants.

The interviews, conducted at the end of April 2021, confirmed what we found in the LL, but the addition of a new channel of data collection brought to light aspects we had not recorded and that helped to complete the picture drawn thus far. The questions mainly concerned attitudes towards the pandemic and compliance with the rules, including the perspectives of customers.

Below we report a fragment of an interview with the owner of the restaurant *El Chorrillano*, near Via Padova, concerning the point of view of shopkeepers regarding the anti-COVID rules:

4) Lo que ha pasado ha sido muy duro para nosotros restoradores // porque la comune // si ayuda, no nos podemos lamentar pero es una situación en el mundo // muy muy dura // gracias a dios hemos abierto […] vinieron a controlar la policía // todo todo todo // pero después ya nos lo dieron [el permiso] […] Milano te enseña a vivir diferente // a respetar tantas cosas […] El que es agradecido con la ciudad la respeta […] el que recién […] todavía tiene la mentalidad que es más vivo que otro. Es también difícil tratar de enderezarlo o de entenderlo, "oye amigo no", o a veces está lleno y quieren entrar primero […]. Pero es nuestro trabajo y nosotros tratamos de mejorar; innovar, es difícil pero ahí estamos.

   What has happened has been very hard for us restaurateurs // because the city council // yes, it does help, we can't complain, but this is a very very hard // situation in the world // thank God we have opened […] they came to check up on us, the police // everything everything everything // but then they gave it to us

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Figure 6. Image 6.1. The window of the restaurant *El Pikeito*. Image 6.2. A purple sticker on the window of the restaurant *El Pikeito*. Pictures: Maria Vittoria Calvi.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

> [the permit] […] Milan teaches you to live differently // to respect so many things // […] Those who are grateful to the city respect it […] One who's just arrived […] still has the mentality of wanting to be the smartest. And it's hard to try to put him right, or to understand him, "look, man, no", or sometimes they want to push to the front when there's a queue. […] But it's our job and we try to improve; it's hard to change, but we try. (El Chorrillano, 24/04/2021)

As the extract shows, the restaurateur takes a position vis-à-vis both the authorities who enforce the rules and the community, including the disrespectful behaviour of newcomers. In this, as in other cases, we conclude that shopkeepers tend to behave responsibly and to produce in their shops an affective regime in which 'nostalgia' for the country of origin becomes not just a tool for commercial promotion (Yao 2020) but also a way of enhancing positive feelings, responsible behaviour and solidarity.

7.6 Conclusion

Previous research has highlighted how cultural and identity elements are manifested through different linguistic and semiotic elements in the ethnic LL of a global city such as Milan, especially in the case of food-related activities, which are strongly oriented towards a nostalgic affective regime (Yao 2020). The use of the mother tongue, alternating with the dominant local language, also expresses a strong emotional link with the culture of origin. At the same time, the willingness to act as reflexive social agents (Alexander 2004: 10) in the context of the host society is expressed through various discourses and forms of mediation (Calvi 2020).

A pandemic triggers a series of innovations, largely shared by all public places, but which in the case of the ethnic LL take on particular traits. First of all, the often-prominent presence of signs and notices inviting compliance with the rules conveys the voice of authority. Interestingly, this affective regime of respect is constructed mainly through the verbal code, with the exception of the icons relating to masks and social distancing. However, these advisory acts are often mitigated through proximity devices that encourage a positive response from customers by creating, from the very first moments of the pandemic, an affective regime based on a sense of belonging to the community and oriented towards solidarity. Thus, by mixing official and unofficial signs, shopkeepers and restaurateurs position themselves as community leaders and mediators, constructing their own discourse of the crisis. Another innovative element is represented by the tightening of the online/offline nexus, which extends the sense of place to the virtual LL.

These variations in the LL create different layers over time. In the first phase, the scant material collected was nevertheless sufficient to show the response of shopkeepers who, also through their choice of the Italian language, placed themselves as responsible actors in the face of the trauma that threatened not only their activity but also their sense of social solidarity.

Messages oriented towards respect for the rules increased in number during the second phase, as did those based on a sense of solidarity, which mend pandemic-related fractures, thereby bridging distances through affective proximity. The third phase witnessed a joyful and triumphant return to sociality, expressed through a

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

multitude of cultural symbols and identity signs. Nevertheless, the affective regime based on respect for rules maintained its central position.

On the methodological side, we collected and cross-referenced data from three different channels (the physical LL, the virtual LL and interviews), at different moments (the three phases), and belonging to different genres (COVID-19 signs, home delivery and takeaway notices, messages of solidarity). This mixed methodological approach, and its continuous adjustments to the pandemic situation, suffered from the logistical limitations of the various phases. However, the lack of systematicity was more than compensated for by the variety of data and the reiteration of the collection itineraries (in the physical LL and online), which made it possible to highlight the immediate responsiveness of the LL with respect to the context and the mediation work of the shopkeepers.

This work has thus highlighted how the pandemic contributed to reinforcing the sense of community expressed in the LL of migration and to strengthening the interaction between the material and the online LL. Moreover, we believe that the data collected, precisely because of the existing limitations, constitute valuable evidence of the variation produced by a traumatic event in the linguistic landscape.

Acknowledgements

All photos in this article are by the authors, who would like to thank their friend and photographer Federico Bonetti for his technical help and for composing the collages.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

References

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2004. Toward a theory of cultural trauma. In Alexander, Jeffrey C. Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giese, Neil J. Smelser & Piotr Sztompka (eds.), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. 1–30. Berkeley/London: University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520936768-002

Androutsopoulos, Jannis & Ana Deumert. 2021. Small shops in Hamburg and Cape Town. A dialogue between materiality and atmosphere. In Robert Blackwood & Unn Røyneland (eds.), *Spaces of Multilingualism*. 165–187. New York: Routledge. https://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781003125839-12

Bagna, Carla & Sabrina Machetti. 2012. LL and (Italian) menus and brand names: A survey around the world. In Christine Hélot, Monica Barni, Rudi Janssens & Carla Bagna (eds.), *Linguistic Landscapes, Multilingualism and Social Change*. 217–230. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Barni, Monica & Carla Bagna. 2015. The critical turn in LL. New methodologies and new items in LL. *Linguistic Landscape* 1(1/2), 6–18. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.1.1-2.01bar

Björkvall, Anders, Sara Van Meerbergen & Gustav Westberg. 2020. Feeling safe while being surveilled: the spatial semiotics of affect at international airports. *Social Semiotics* [Published online]. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2020.1790801

Blackwood, Robert, Elizabeth Lanza & Hirut Woldemariam (eds.). 2016. *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes.* London: Bloomsbury. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474295352

Blommaert, Jan. 2013. *Ethnography, Superdiversity and Linguistic Landscapes: Chronicles of Complexity*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783090419

Blommaert, Jan. 2015. Chronotopes, scales, and complexity in the study of language in society. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44(1), 105–116. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102214-014035

Blommaert, Jan. 2019. From groups to actions and back in online-offline sociolinguistics. *Multilingua* 38(4), 485–493. https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2018-0114

Blommaert, Jan. 2020. COVID-19 and globalization. *Ctrl+Alt+Dem Jan Blommaert's Research Blog*. Accessed 15 January 2022. https://alternative-democracy-research.org/2020/03/06/covid19-and-globalization/.

Blommaert, Jan & Ico Maly 2019. Invisible lines in the online/offline Linguistic Landscape. *Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies* 223, 1–10. Tilburg: Tilburg University.

Boccagni, Paolo. 2008. Votare per sentirsi a casa. Il transnazionalismo politico tra gli immigrati ecuadoriani in Italia. ***POLIS****πόλης* 22(1), 35–56.

Böhme, Gernot. 2017 [2013]. *Atmospheric Architectures: The Aesthetics of Felt Spaces*. Edited and translated by Anna Christina Engels-Schwartzpaul. London: Bloomsbury. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474258111

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24

Breier, Dorothea. 2020. The tool, the heart, and the mirror: About emotional aspects of language in transcultural urban contexts. In Laura Siragusa & Jenanne K. Ferguson (eds.), *Responsibility and Language Practices in Place*. 41–61. Helsinki: SKS.

Caffi, Claudia & Richard W. Janney. 1994. Toward a pragmatics of emotive communication. *Journal of Pragmatics* 22(3/4), 325–373. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(94)90115-5

Calvi, Maria Vittoria. 2016. La oralidad en el paisaje lingüístico latinoamericano en Milán. In Antonio Miguel Bañón Hernández, María del Mar Espejo Muriel, Bárbara Herrero Muñoz-Cobo & Juan Luis López Cruces (eds.), *Oralidad y análisis del discurso. Homenaje a Luis Cortés Rodríguez*. 123–139. Almería: Editorial Universidad de Almería.

Calvi, Maria Vittoria. 2020. Prácticas transnacionales e integración en el paisaje lingüístico de Milán. *Lengua y migración / Language and Migration* 12(1), 203–234. http://hdl.handle.net/10017/43630

Calvi, Maria Vittoria. 2021. The act of naming. In Patricia Gubitosi & Michelle F. Ramos Pellicia (eds.), *Linguistic Landscape in the Spanish-Speaking World*. 365–392. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/ihll.35.14cal

Calvi, Maria Vittoria & Marcella Uberti-Bona. 2020. Negotiating languages, identities and space in Hispanic linguistic landscape in Milan. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 41(1), 25–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2019.1622709

Cenoz Jasone & Durk Gorter. 2006. Linguistic landscapes and minority languages. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 3(1), 67–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668386

Chan, Cheris Shun-ching, Paul Joosse, Sylvia J. Martin & Xiaoli Tian. 2020. Ethnography in calamitous times. *Etnografia e ricerca qualitativa* 2, 175–184. http://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.3240/97803

Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2018. Post-humanitarianism. In Tim Allen, Anna Macdonald, Henry Radice (eds.), *Humanitarianism: A Dictionary of Concepts*. 253–268. London: Routledge.

Cresswell, Tim. 2015. *Place. An Introduction*. Second edition. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

Davies, Bronwyn & Rom Harré. 1990. Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20(1), 43–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.1990.tb00174.x

Demertzis, Nicolas & Ron Eyerman. 2020. Covid-19 as cultural trauma. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 8(3), 428–450. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41290-020-00112-z

Eckert, Penelope. 2012. Three waves of variation study: The emergence of meaning in the study of variation. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41(1), 87–100. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092611-145828

Gaiser Leonie & Yaron Matras. 2020. Defining the position of 'community' in the study of linguistic landscapes. *Linguistic Landscape* 6(2), 109–127. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.19028.gai

García Negroni, María Marta. 2019. El enfoque dialógico de la argumentación y la polifonía, puntos de vista evidenciales y puntos de vista alusivos. *RILCE* 35(2), 521–549. https://doi.org/10.15581/008.35.2.521-49

Glaser, Barney & Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Gorter, Durk & Jasone Cenoz. 2020. Theoretical development of linguistic landscape studies. *Linguistic Landscape* 6(1), 16–22. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.00020.gor

Hidalgo, Anna & Shamus Khan. 2020. Blindsight ethnography and exceptional moments. *Etnografia e ricerca qualitativa* 2, 185–193. https://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.3240/97804

Hopkyns, Sarah & Melanie van den Hoven. 2022. Linguistic diversity and inclusion in Abu Dhabi's linguistic landscape during the COVID-19 period. *Multilingua* 41(2), 201–232. https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2020-0187

Jaworski, Adam & Crispin Thurlow (eds.). 2010. *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*. London: Bloomsbury.

https://doi.org/10.21435/sflin.24